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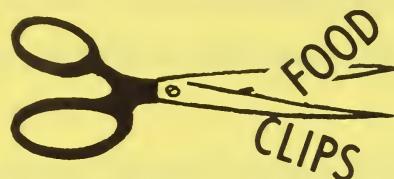
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Food and Home Notes

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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Freezing is not recommended for most cheeses because they usually become crumbly and mealy when frozen...reports home economists at the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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Fresh Ricotta cottage cheese should be refrigerated covered and used within 3 to 5 days. Most cream cheeses--if refrigerated covered or tightly wrapped--should be used within two weeks.

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One of the best ways to use cheese that has dried out is to grate it and store it in a tightly covered jar.

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Need shredded cheese? It takes about one half pound of cheese to make 2 cups of shredded cheese.

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If you're preparing a fondue dish and no earthenware dish is available, use heat proof glass, ceramic saucepan or casserole dish.

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Hard cheeses--Cheddar and Swiss--keep much longer than soft cheeses if protected from drying out.

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ON BUYING SEED

—You're Protected

It doesn't matter if you're buying only a few grams of garden seed--or one hundred pounds of some farm seeds --you can be sure that the label truthfully represents what's in the package. It is the law. Called the "Federal Seed Act," the legal guides assure you of the seed production quality control, according to the Agricultural Marketing Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Even if you buy a package with a blend of various types of seed--as in lawn seed--the exact percentage of each kind of seed is carefully monitored in the processing plant.

But--there is no guarantee on the other conditions such as weather, soil condition, and soil-borne diseases and pests. You need to plant according to the right time and according to the best seedbed conditions possible. However, if you feel that the seed was in any way faulty you may seek help of the Department of Agriculture in your state. If, in fact, the seeds have been shipped across state lines, the U.S. Department of Agriculture would be notified by the state and would investigate. But--chances are, you'll not have a problem--and you can plant with confidence.

DON'T BRING PESTS BACK

—Even One Can Hurt!

It's that time of year again--when our thoughts turn to vacationing abroad. And one of the nicest things about going out of the country is collecting souvenirs to bring home.

"But watch out!" says the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). "Don't pick souvenirs that are pest-risks or you'll lose them when you return to the United States."

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) enforces federal quarantines against bringing in certain foreign plants, meats, and products made from plant or animal materials. Why? Because innocent-looking foreign products may carry pests and diseases that could endanger our plant and animal life.

Many travelers think restrictions on agricultural imports are silly or are intended only for the big-time importer. "My one orange can't hurt," they think. But even one orange--or one plant in soil--may be harboring a pest that can eventually build up and cause a great deal of damage. For example, a single witchweed plant produces up to 500,000 seeds in a year. This foreign parasitic pest destroys corn, sugarcane, rice, and other important food crops.

A sick parakeet brought the exotic Newcastle disease into California in 1971. To eradicate this highly contagious poultry disease, federal and state officials had to slaughter more than 11 million infested and exposed poultry and pet birds.

Another example of how "even one can hurt" occurred on a recent international flight. Inspectors found 24 percent of the passengers were carrying illegal items--only one or two each, but they added up to over 40 pounds of potential trouble.

What may be brought into the United States? You can find out from the new publication, "Travelers' Tips." Write for a free copy to APHIS Traveler's Tips, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250.

CONSUMER SURVEY

Rating the Food Industry

American consumers said they were generally highly satisfied with food they bought and the stores they buy it from, according to a nationwide survey during the spring of 1974, issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Eighteen hundred respondents were interviewed and two-thirds of the people said they were satisfied all or almost all the time. But--there were complaints too.

Prices bothered shoppers the most -- and individual food items and reliability of food manufacturers' ads drew heavy criticism in the survey "Consumer Satisfaction with Food Products and Marketing Services" prepared by USDA's Economic Research Service.

Of the seven major food product groups -- dairy products and eggs pleased most consumers. The convenience products rated last. The prices of beef, pork, fresh tomatoes, potatoes and milk brought complaints. Consumers found prices for processed fruits and vegetables were most acceptable.

Tomatoes -- price, ripeness, taste, and appearance -- got the lowest rating of 31 products. In the convenience foods, consumers gave skillet main dishes and frozen convenience dinners the lowest rating. Beef, pork, and lamb products were criticized for price and fat content.

Product and shopping information supplied by food manufacturers displeased over a third of the respondents. Dissatisfaction with a foodstore (during the previous year) was a complaint noted by 70 percent of those questioned. Most of the dissatisfied customers voiced their complaints to friends and relatives -- not to the manufacturers or public officials. Most of the disgruntled shoppers, according to the survey, tend to come from larger households in suburban areas of the Northeast -- college educated people less than 55 years old who earn over \$15,000 a year. Central city residents share a more negative image of food retailers than do their suburban neighbors.

EXTENSION SERVICES

— and Helping Rural People

Rural health care -- one of the major concerns in the country today -- is also one of the top priorities in the Extension programs organized on the state level with the land-grant colleges in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Teaching preventive health care is one of the important aspects of the program. Extension staff members work as a team with health agencies so more effective health programs can be developed.

Extension home economist, Mrs. Anna Mae Lehr, Columbia County, (N.E. Pennsylvania) tackled the problem in her community by suggesting an action program due to the unavailability of doctors, hospitals and medical services in general. The health problems of "older persons living alone" were part of her concern.

Community interest was enlisted and members from the Extension Homemakers Council, the Central Pennsylvania Health Council, Kiwanis Club, Board of Commissioners all attended a public meeting where the health problems were cured. A volunteer health care steering committee was formed to spearhead a Rural Health Care Center-- one to meet the needs of this area. Problems of getting a doctor and getting to the hospital were paramount in their discussions.

As a result of the community efforts, a Health Care Center with three physicians and two dentists is scheduled to open in Benton Borough, Pa., in July, to serve people in a four-county area. Community concern spurred by Extension's expertise in "putting it all together" has created an example for other communities to follow in solving their rural health problems.

Information on Extension health education efforts in your State may be obtained by contacting the Extension State Leader--Home Economics at your State Land-Grant University.

NOTE: Additional information for the MEDIA and photographs (when applicable) may be obtained from: Shirley Wagener, Editor of Food and Home Notes, Room 535-A, Office of Communication/Press Division, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Or telephone 202-447-5898.